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## PSYCHOLOGY AND HISTORY.<sup>1</sup>

NO study has had a more rapid development in recent years, or is now engaging more attention, than psychology. Its principles, laws, and methods are all discussed with more or less competency. A few of the moral sciences have attempted and in part succeeded in renewing themselves upon a psychological basis. Even philosophic systems which once were built mainly on ontological conceptions, are now constrained to take a large part in the consideration of the processes of consciousness, which are more and more considered as the necessary point of departure in the discussion of all philosophic problems. Now, given the generally recognised importance which psychological investigations have in our day acquired, it may not be useless to examine the results at which they have arrived, not so much with respect to psychology itself as with regard to knowledge in general. For the measure of value which a science possesses is found in the last analysis not only in its contribution to a precise knowledge of the facts, but also in the degree in which it influences our general conception of the facts themselves.

The first thing to be considered in a science, that without which it can never arrive at definite and ordered results, that indeed which distinguishes science from empiricism, is its method of investigation. The scientific renaissance of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was largely the product of a new critical tendency of thought which took the form of a new and more rational method.

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<sup>1</sup> Translated from the manuscript of G. Villa by I. W. Howerth, Ph. D., of the University of Chicago.

The historical method in its turn revived the interest in the historical and philological sciences, previously encumbered by rhetorical and pragmatistical preconceptions which prevented them from fulfilling their highest function, that is, the gaining of a scientific and objective knowledge of the facts. I need only mention the recent progress of economics, thanks to the application of rigorous methods. Now, is psychology able to boast of the progress in its methods, and hence of the wealth and precision of results which the other moral sciences have reached? It is not a bold affirmation to say that it has not.

The causes of the uncertainty of method in which psychology is yet entangled, and hence of its slow progress in comparison with that of many of the historical, philological, and social sciences, are very complex, and I have examined them elsewhere somewhat more minutely than I am able to do here.<sup>1</sup> But however various and complex these causes may be, they may all be reduced to a single fundamental one, and that is the vastness of the field which psychology attempts to cover. While sociology, psychology, political economy, philology, and law, study only special phases of the manifestations of the human intellect, feeling and will, psychology embraces the entire domain of these phenomena and strives to reduce them all to general principles. Moreover, it has not only to roam over this vast field whose limits are so extraordinarily extended in time and space, but it must also proceed beyond the confines of human activity, and trace step by step the formation and development of the processes of knowledge in the lower animals, which processes are naturally related to those of man. In the history of man himself psychology must follow the progressive evolution of his mental activity in such a way that out of all these comparative studies may issue some general principle which may serve to explain how the consciousness of civilised man has been developed. Not only must psychology study the psychic aspect of organic beings, but it must also investigate the relations which exist between the processes of knowledge and corporeal phenomena. It

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<sup>1</sup> See my volume *La psicologia contemporanea*. Turin, Fratelli Bocca, 1899,

must investigate the structure and function of those organs which stand in direct relation to these processes, and penetrate into the most burning and profound questions of the fundamental science of all vital phenomena, that is, biology. Hence psychology touches upon every side the principles upon which both the moral and the natural sciences are founded. From this complexity of its relations arises its variety of method, and the difficulty of making its methods converge toward a single end.

The most ancient method that we find in the history of psychology is the so-called method of introspection as it was for a long time practised. This method, although it led some philosophers to a profound insight into human knowledge, was almost always bound up with philosophic speculation upon which the examination of psychic facts was made directly to depend. The insufficiency of this method, shown so clearly by modern psychologists, is too evident to need demonstration. Pure introspection leads inevitably to an illusion, and if it happens to produce something useful it is only the fruit of a casual and happy intuition, and not the result of a scientific procedure. Its results are the product of art, not of science. To remedy the defects and the errors of this introspective method, so dear to the ancient spiritualistic philosophers, psychology and all modern positive philosophy are trying to follow the same path upon which the biological sciences have entered, and which has already led them to such great success. That is to say, psychology is attempting to apply physiological experimentation to the processes of knowledge. It is thus that the young science expects to open for itself a new era! Materialistic philosophy seems to be delivered over to these researches and cries aloud that no other form of psychology except physiological psychology is possible; and that final explanation of psychic facts is to be found only in cerebral phenomena, which, according to that philosophy, represent the real basis of what appears to us under the aspect of conscious phenomena. Although this opinion is now somewhat shaken, both on account of the declining progress of materialistic philosophy, and also by the clearest demonstrations of the greatest representatives of physiological psychology, who have repeated

over and over that the final end of experimental psychology is the knowledge of psychic processes, and that it has nothing in common with physiology except the use of certain means of experimentation, it may still be said that the materialistic interpretation of the new methods of psychology is rooted in many minds, especially among students of the natural sciences and of medicine. The exertions of certain psychologists and philosophers, however, have not prevented the new experimental science from following the proper tendency and methods. It has begun to distinguish its own ends from those of physiology, and has thus rapidly increased its appropriate researches in almost the whole domain of the elementary psychic processes, and has engaged the attention; especially in some countries, of a numerous class of students. But unfortunately, while the minute work of analysis has led in some sciences, as for example in the philological sciences, to important results which have radically reformed the general conceptions and principles upon which they are founded, in experimental psychology nothing similar has yet taken place, nor seems likely to take place for some time to come. The facts and laws established upon even a relatively firm foundation are yet very few. Many of them are yet the subject of lively discussion and cannot be reduced to any general and constant principle. While there is a relative agreement among experimental psychologists in respect to certain methods of research, there is a great divergence of opinion among them concerning the aims and limits of their science. Some believe, and with reason, that the desire to extend experimentation down to the elementary psychic processes cannot lead to any positive result, and does not correspond to the true aim which psychology should set up. Others, still holding to the old materialistic ideas which under the name of psycho-physical materialism strive to hold their place in experimental psychology, attempt to subject the whole vast field of psychic processes of the individual to the experimental, even the physiological, method. The effect of these discussions makes itself felt in psychology. The diversity of psychological opinion and principles is sometimes a cause and sometimes a consequence of these different and even opposed tendencies in

method. It will be sufficient to recall in this connexion the example of certain experimental psychologists who attempt to reduce the processes of feeling and will to muscular sensation, attempts which are strongly combated by other experimenters.

Positive and evolutionary philosophy, moreover, upholds against the old spiritualistic psychology, and perhaps more firmly, another method of external observation, that is, the social, which consists in the study of the collective productions of the human consciousness as they are manifested in history and in social institutions. This branch of psychology, growing out of the various social sciences, philological and natural, like ethnography, sociology, the history of religions and of language, and anthropology, has taken the name of social psychology. But if the limits of experimental psychology are indefinite, those of this other psychological method are still more so. As the founders of this new science came from the ranks of workers in the special sciences and philosophy, the new science is influenced by the methods pursued in these special studies. Thus it is that social psychology may approach the philosophy of history, or linguistics, or sociology, or anthropology, or ethnography. The positive philosophers are inclined to make it a kind of sociology. With some of them, indeed, sociology and social psychology are identical. On the other hand, the philosophers who approach it with spiritualistic theories, wish to assimilate it to the philosophy of history, which in its turn has been reduced by the positive philosophers to sociology. The philologists seek to found social psychology upon the science of language, the anthropologists upon ethnography, etc. While some years have passed since Lazarus and Steinthal, in 1855, began the publication of studies in ethnographical psychology in their celebrated periodical, it cannot be said that great progress has been made in the delimitation of the new science. Even to-day the confusion in this domain is very great, and every new treatise on the subject advances new criteria and new principles.

In addition to these two principal methods, scientific psychology has evolved others which are to some extent related to them. These may be found in the so-called child psychology, animal psy-

chology, and pathological psychology. It is indisputable that every one of these psychological methods has produced valuable results. It cannot be said, however, that they so well accord with the two principal psychological methods as to bringing forth the results which might be hoped for. The majority of the students of child psychology and animal psychology proceed empirically, caring little about following the procedure of experimental and social psychology.<sup>1</sup> Hence it is not a rare thing to find some of these psychologists who have the naïve conviction that they are presenting new and important ideas, and who do not seem to be aware that their theories are long since antiquated and displaced by others corresponding better to the facts. As to the cultivators of pathological psychology, they are for the most part, with splendid exceptions, psychiatrists who have passed over from the study of physiology and histology without any special preparation for the study of mental processes.

From all this it may be seen that we are yet far from a union of the various psychological methods, from which union alone may issue a new, solid and organic science. To all these uncertainties and discordances in method might be added the confusion of thought which has brought forth some philosophical doctrines which have arisen from time to time, and even in our day in which general philosophy is held in so little consideration. On account of the very great importance of psychology it is to contemporary philosophers a special object of criticism and discussion. Not all of these philosophers are careful to study the methods and results of scientific psychology, but for the most part discuss the matter with purely subjective criteria. Such discussions and criticisms serve only to delay the progress of the young science.

Reference to all these unfavorable conditions of modern psychology ought not to lead to the conclusion that no hope may be cherished in regard to a unity of method. That would be a hasty and erroneous conclusion. The clear presentation of the difficulties

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<sup>1</sup> A splendid exception, so far as child psychology is concerned, is presented in J. Mark Baldwin's *Mental Development in the Child and the Race*.

which psychology has yet to overcome before arriving at its true scope, ought to be a means of reaching a large and just comprehension of its nature, and therefore of its methods. Now what is the final scope towards which these various methods ought to converge? And why is it thought necessary to write about it and to discuss it so much?

The answer to these questions must be sought in the fact that we intuitively feel more or less clearly that psychology must be something more than the experimental and minute examination of the elementary processes of knowledge, of sensation, of representation, of simple feeling, and of the acts of reason. It must be the study of the mind considered in all its manifestations, not only in the individual, but also in history.<sup>1</sup> It is felt, in short, that the importance of the new science lies in the fact that it is fundamental to all those disciplines which are called moral.

It is well known that the historical, philological, juridical, economical, and social sciences have had such a remarkable development in the last century that it constitutes one of the most salient features of our age. The so-called moral studies have risen to the rank of sciences. They have been forced more and more to rival in exactness the physical and natural sciences, and they have already arrived at results which may be considered as definite acquisitions of knowledge. The historical method has put these sciences in the way of the exact researches which has led to the establishment in the domain of history, civil, artistic, literary, religious, juridical, economic, and social, of a great number of new data and facts. It has led us to change radically our conceptions in regard to the origin of social institutions, and artistic and literary manifestations; and in fine to free all these studies from philosophic and moral preconceptions, endeavoring with some success to consider them with the same objectivity with which naturalists are now studying natural phenomena. But the historical method, while immensely beneficial to the moral sciences, has always been held

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<sup>1</sup> This is pointed out by George Trumbell Ladd in an article in the *Psychological Review* for March 1899 on "Certain Hindrances to the Progress of Psychology in America."



to a general rather than an empirical procedure, caring little about investigating all the manifestations of the human mind, the reciprocal relations of which that method had clearly put into relief. It should be able to lead us to some general principle, to some fundamental law which might give us the key to the explanation of all these phenomena. The historical method, in short, has given more attention to the description and exposition of the facts than to their explanation. It has been held more to a descriptive and narrative procedure than to an explanatory. The recent advances in the methods of psychology, some of which, as for instance social psychology, are found in more direct contact with the historical and social sciences—have in fact arisen from them—should naturally lead us to a result which may explain all the manifestations of the collective consciousness, which are studied in the moral sciences by means of certain general principles which ought to be common to all peoples and to all ages, and which ought, moreover, to be found both in the individual and in the species. This co-ordination of all the moral sciences under general and common principles is an indispensable need of human thought, which always tries to unify and simplify the complexity of facts which it finds before it. Hence it is natural that the moral sciences, after having worked for many years to examine, ascertain, and establish facts, should now give attention to a very important question for the theory of knowledge, namely, the question in regard to the relations existing between the fundamental principles of each of them and the fundamental principles common to them all.

There is no doubt that if we could arrive at a solution of this problem, and arrange all the sciences of the mind in a logical and rational system, they would receive a new and a great impetus, and would finally arrive at what has always been their highest aim, namely, the explanation of the facts which they have established. The physical and biological sciences have already passed through their crisis, and now present a marvellous unity which rests solidly upon the basis of the general principles of dynamics. Such a basis for the moral sciences may be found in psychology. Already there has arisen in the moral sciences, especially in the juridical and so-

cial, a reaction against the somewhat empirical method of the historical school, and the works of Jhering, Wagner, Tarde, Simmel, Giddings, and others seek to found law, political economy, and sociology upon the principles of psychology. This tendency finds authoritative expression in profound philosophical works in which there is drawn up a complete classification of the sciences, and which contain a criticism of all their methods. Such works are the *Logics* of Wundt and of Sigwart. This doctrine ought to be accepted by philosophers and psychologists, for it gives a reason to hope that the contemporary movement in the moral sciences, especially in some countries where scientific thought is very active, as in learned Germany and in the young United States, is following a very decided psychological tendency, even in those moral sciences which, like political economy, show themselves least inclined to it.

The so-called historical school had clearly seen the fact, of extraordinary importance in general knowledge, that historical events, social and religious institutions, language and all the artistic and literary productions of a people are not created by the work of a few isolated individuals, but are the results of the long laborious work of many generations, upon which work the genius puts the final stamp. All manifestations of the collective consciousness of a people are therefore historical facts, and so history becomes the typical science to which all the other moral sciences should conform. All historical events must therefore be conceived as results of a complexity of precedent and concomitant circumstances, and hence the real importance of the individual factor is much diminished. Civil history itself, which seems to be more the result of individual action and hence less easy than other forms of history to be scientifically explained, presents itself under a new aspect, and the explanation of historical events is now sought, not in the psychological motives of the most conspicuous personages, but in the general ethnic, political, social, and religious conditions of the age in which the events took place. Now that the historical method is supplemented by the psychological, we may hope that history may one day become a new science, and that it may arrive at a true explanation of the facts which it studies.

It sometimes happens, however, in the domain of thought that things take an unforeseen direction, and that which appears as undisputed truth to-day may to-morrow be put aside and in its place we may find other opinions which were thought to have been dead forever, and which are now restored under a new form to the honor and rank of incontestable truth. While a few years ago the sociological conception of history was admitted by almost all historians and philosophers, it has now begun to be doubted, and they are seeking to find the limits of scientific explanation in history and to ascertain what part artistic intuition plays in it. More and more discussions and treatises show signs of the change which is going on in the conception of the historical figures which have emerged from innumerable crowds of obscure and secondary men. It appears that humanity feels once more the necessity of admiring the "hero," and of restoring the legendary aureole which the critic had stripped from him, and is turning to the belief that to him alone is due all sudden changes in circumstances and in institutions. This is illustrated by the revival of the Napoleonic legend, and by the interest taken in the doings of great men. Against the exaggeration of the sociological method now employed in positive philosophy, and which allows too little importance in history to the individual factor, has now arisen an individualistic tendency which divides even the sociologists themselves. Some among them, like Gabriel Tarde, maintain resolutely the importance of the individual genius in the origin of social institutions.<sup>1</sup> Others, like Ludwig Gumplowicz, accurately distinguish history from sociology. Only the latter, according to this author, can aspire to the rank of a science. History, he thinks, is condemned to remain forever a form of art, and cannot therefore have any other scope beyond that of procuring æsthetic pleasure.<sup>2</sup> Thus arises once more the famous

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<sup>1</sup> See among the numerous works of this author his paper entitled "La Sociologie" in *Etudes de psychologie sociale*, 1898.

<sup>2</sup> See Gumplowicz, *Sociologie und Politik*, 1892. Ratzenhofer (*Die sociologische Erkenntniss*, Leipsic, 1898) also maintains that it is impossible for history ever to become a true science. P. Barth is of the same opinion. See his "Fragen der Geschichtswissenschaft," in the October number of *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie*.

theory of Schopenhauer, according to which history can never become a science for the reason that the facts which it discusses cannot be subordinated to any general laws.

All these tendencies which are manifested in the special sciences, historical and sociological, have, as might be expected, a sensible echo in philosophy. For some years there has been an attempt upon the part of some philosophers to build up a general system of the sciences on the basis of new criteria, and an objection to the distribution of knowledge into the two great sections of natural or physical, and moral, which appears now to be almost generally accepted. The most original feature of these attempts is the conception of history which they manifest. The problem of history, therefore, transcends the limits of a special question of methodology and becomes a problem of great importance to all knowledge. Some of these attempts merit a serious examination.

The first to announce clearly the idea just referred to was, I believe, a German philosopher well known by his important works on the history of philosophy, Wilhelm Windelband. It was presented in an academic discourse delivered by him as Rector of the University of Strassburg, in 1894. This brief but highly interesting discourse was entitled *History and the Natural Sciences*.<sup>1</sup> Windelband develops very clearly the idea that the natural sciences may subordinate their facts to general conceptions, that is, to constant laws, and hence they may be called *Gesetzwissenschaften*, or sciences of phenomena subject to laws. There are other sciences, he maintained, which do not seek for general laws, but only to establish a succession, or historical series, of facts. The first might be called "nomoletic" sciences, the second "idiographic," or the sciences dealing merely with events (*Ereigniswissenschaften*); or as another philosopher, Rickert, who has developed the same idea, calls them, "the sciences of pure reality." But this is not merely a change of names, for these two groups do not correspond to those represented by the physical and moral sciences. For in the first group these philosophers put some of the disciplines usually com-

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<sup>1</sup> W. Windelband, *Geschichte und Naturwissenschaft*, Strassburg, 1894.

prehended by the moral sciences, as for instance psychology; and in the second, some of those belonging to the group of natural sciences, that is, those which have not yet succeeded in explaining their facts by means of constant laws, and which must not be considered as having established a series of phenomena. These ideas have been more amply developed by the philosopher who has just been named, Rickert, Professor in the University of Freiburg, Germany, in a very important work (of which he has issued only the first volume), entitled *Limits in the Formation of the Concepts Appropriate to the Natural Sciences*, and in a discourse published a few months ago on *The History of Civilisation and Natural Science*.<sup>1</sup> This author, who among other merits has that, which is not very common among German philosophers, of expressing himself with great clearness, maintains that this new division of the sciences is the only possible mode of combating successfully the naturalistic conceptions of history; for, by comparing these two conceptions, that of natural science and history, every possibility of confusion is eliminated. We have, therefore, two great groups of sciences, comprehended under two concepts which are employed in a more general signification than that which is commonly attached to them. Under the concept of "natural science" are comprehended all those sciences which may be reduced to laws, or to general abstract principles. The concept of "history" embraces all the sciences which are limited to the establishment of a succession of facts, whether natural or moral. Psychology would thus be comprehended in the first group; geology and meteorology in the second. The former science, according to these philosophers, is in the way of establishing laws having an equal value with those of the natural sciences. The latter, however, must be counted, for the present at least, as ascertaining and presenting facts, and nothing more.

In the present connexion it is especially important for us to examine the part which is assigned in this new system to psychol-

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<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Rickert, *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung*, Erste Hälfte, Freiburg i. B. und Leipzig, 1896. *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft. Ein Vortrag. Ib.* 1899.

ogy. That it should be included among the natural sciences has been maintained, as we have said, by the materialistic philosophers, from the pure materialists of the middle of the last century to those who have arisen from the school of experimental psychology, that is, the so-called psycho-physical materialists. The most authoritative representative of this school, Hugo Münsterberg, in a recent development of an idea already expressed by him in numerous works, maintains that it is absolutely necessary to distinguish psychology from history, because the first studies only the individual and must proceed by means of physiological experiments, certain of reaching in this manner laws as secure as those of physics; while the second is a science only in name, that is, it is a mere accumulation of empirical cognitions.<sup>1</sup> The new psycho-physical materialism is found, according to its leading representative, in accord with the ideas of the two philosophers whom I have mentioned above, except that these two do not wish to deny to history the title of science, as did Schopenhauer, but make of it a science *sui generis*, a branch of knowledge which is content, as Leibnitz said, with *verités de fait*, not being able to aspire to the *verités éternelles*. On the one hand, then, we have psychology, which is considered only under the aspect of individual psychology, while on the other we have all the historical sciences, and first among them, civil history, at least the history of social and religious institutions and of artistic and literary productions, which Rickert calls the science of civilisation (*Kulturwissenschaft*). A philosopher and sociologist, Ludwig Stein, while recognising in history the specific character of being a succession of facts which are never repeated, makes an exception in the case of the history of society, which, according to him, follows a certain rhythm which permits it to be reduced to general and constant principles.<sup>2</sup>

We see now the principles upon which the above division is

<sup>1</sup> Hugo Münsterberg, "Psychology and History," *Psychological Review*, January, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> Ludwig Stein, "Wesen und Aufgabe der Sociologie," *Archiv für systematische Philosophie*, März, 1898.

based. Those who maintain it declare that the other division of the sciences into natural and moral is an artificial division which does not correspond perfectly to reality. They say, and not without reason, that natural phenomena are always so intimately connected with psychical that the sciences which study the latter must always recognise the methods which are used in the latter, if they wish to progress and to complete their researches. They must recognise that psychology is placed upon scientific ground only when it applies the methods of physiology; that political economy, sociology, linguistics, and the other moral sciences have continuous need for the data of the biological and physical sciences. In this respect we are in perfect agreement. All the divisions and classifications of the sciences into groups and sub-groups are more or less artificial, for the reason, that we must always keep in mind the fact, which is too often forgotten, that all facts, moral, sociological, historical, and biological, present themselves as a great unity in which all the parts are so intimately bound up that they cannot be separated except by the most patient work of analysis and abstraction. And yet all these classifications are necessary for the arrangement of the contents of our thought under some general principles, and are a most effective means of advancing the progress of knowledge. Now if this classification is rendered necessary by the needs of our thought and by the necessity of method, it must be based upon principles which are not purely formal, but which may be referred to the same essence as the phenomena which are included in the classification and disposed in a system. Now the fact that some sciences have arrived at a point where they can arrange their facts under constant laws, while others are not yet able to go beyond the mere discovery of facts, is not a sufficient difference to warrant us in declaring a fundamental diversity between the two kinds of knowledge. It represents a temporary condition in the history of thought more than a permanent characteristic. The final aspiration of scientific thought is to subordinate all kinds of knowledge to fixed concepts which may explain the phenomena of reality in its various forms. The stage of pure description and narration is a preparatory stage from which the physical and natural sciences

have passed before arriving at the stage of relative perfection which some have reached, and in which by means of experimentation they seek the causes of phenomena ; that is, they seek not only to describe but also to explain. So the biological sciences have made the greatest progress only when, abandoning the pure descriptive and speculative method, they have devoted themselves to investigating the origin of the transformation of the different parts of the organism. So meteorology, although still not in so advanced a stage as physics, is nevertheless seeking (and there is no doubt that it will succeed) to reduce all its phenomena to the general laws of physics and to demonstrate these phenomena by means of such laws ; and so it has been forced to transform itself from a descriptive to an explanatory science. And the same may be said of mineralogy and other natural sciences, which are to-day endeavoring to establish themselves upon the general principles of physics and chemistry, and which in doing so have made rapid progress. The division of knowledge into the explanatory sciences and the sciences of pure fact has then a provisional value. In order to ascribe to it a permanent value it would be necessary to show that some sciences can never be explanatory. And this is what the philosophers above mentioned endeavor to do with respect to human history, which can never lead, according to them, to the general laws of psychology.

Between psychology and history these philosophers establish a profound difference. Psychology, they say, attempts to find the general laws of thought in all its forms, and is therefore an abstract science *par excellence* because it deals only with concepts. It must, therefore, be a natural science having, for example, the same character as physiology. History, on the other hand, has a quite different character, as it regards only the single, concrete, real, individual (*das Einmalige*) fact. It may be observed, however, that this idea of reducing the processes of knowledge to the same condition as those of physiology is quite an arbitrary one not justified by the results of scientific psychology. Physiological phenomena are reducible to the general laws of physical energy, while those of psychology are qualitative processes not transformable into quan-



titative equivalents. Physical phenomena, and hence also physiological, are reducible to a fixed substratum, purely conceptual, which is necessary to explain the constancy of energy. The processes of consciousness, however, can never be reduced to any such substratum. They are purely concrete in their nature. It is not correct to affirm, as does Rickert, that "in simple sensations psychology must find a concept which corresponds perfectly with that of energy in physics."<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, the attempts made by psychologists who follow the tendency of psycho-physical materialism, among whom is Rickert, to reduce all the facts of consciousness to sensations, are not confirmed by any serious proof and may be set down as a pure desire inspired by metaphysical preconceptions. All that constitutes spontaneous affective and volitional life can never be analysed into sensations.

We have, then, two absolutely different principles which govern psychic and physical facts. The processes of knowledge cannot be subjected to the same principles as natural phenomena, and this gives to all psychic processes that concrete individual character which has been sought only in historical facts. These latter are certainly more complicated than the elementary psychic processes. That is indisputable. But the same thing may be said of biological phenomena, which represent, in comparison with general physical phenomena, a higher degree of complexity, which confers upon each of them a detached individual character. The more complex the phenomena, the more they present the specific characteristics of individuality. And to explain them a knowledge of general laws must be aided by intuition. Just as one may know the general laws of physiology without possessing the intuition of the physician who rapidly diagnoses a case, so the theoretical psychologists may be incapable of explaining a single phenomenon. Here art necessarily comes to the aid of science. But this does not mean that all phenomena, whether physical or psychical, may not be scientifically explained. Historical events for instance, although the result of psychic processes which present a high degree of complexity, may

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<sup>1</sup> Rickert, *Die Grenzen*, p. 198.

all be reduced to the general laws of consciousness. It is said by Rickert, Windelband, and others, that every historical event has an original and novel character, on account of which it cannot be reduced to any constant principle. And this is very true. A historical fact is never repeated in the same form in which it first presents itself. But that which is true of historical facts is true also of every psychic fact, even the most elementary. And it is precisely the most salient and specific character of the processes of consciousness that they are never renewed in the same form, but with every combination in which they are found a new form appears. This originality of the psychic processes is inherent in its very nature, which is for the most part subjective. Although the processes of knowledge are all directly or indirectly determined by external excitations, the one in which the psychic elements are combined depends largely upon the subjective state of the individual consciousness. So the series of psychic processes presents, from the simplest to the most complex, the same character, that is, the character of a concatenated series of facts, but not in the form of physical causality according to which antecedent facts necessarily produce the successive phenomena. In a series of human actions one may ascend from effects to causes, and the function of psychology is precisely that of explaining this concatenation, but it is not able with certainty and definiteness to deduce from the actual phenomena the future consequences. Among the few established results of modern psychology may be enumerated the very important one of having succeeded in establishing the law of the continuous creation of new processes in the individual and also in history.

The investigation, examination, and confirmation of facts is therefore the indispensable means to every historical reconstruction, but it is not the final end, which must consist in the explanation of the facts themselves. And this explanation can only consist in an application of the general principles of psychology, an application which naturally meets with more or less success according to the attitude of the historian with respect to perceiving by intuition the intimate nature of the phenomena. But the final ex-

planation lies always, as Sigwart has clearly shown,<sup>1</sup> in the laws of psychology, which do not possess, it is true, the rigor, and above all the power, of prevision which physical laws possess. Nevertheless they succeed in establishing certain typical forms which all psychic processes follow in their course. So history aspires to what every science aspires to, that is, to give an explanation of its facts. If history can never reach this end it must renounce the title of science, and must remain a complex of empirical cognitions, a form of art and nothing more. It can be a science only on condition of subordinating its own phenomena to general principles. A science of pure reality, of events solely, as Windelband, Rickert, and Stein define history, is a contradiction in terms.

This leads us to another important consideration. According to the theory which we have expounded, history, that is the complex evolution of phenomena, natural and human, must turn away from the attempt to find any law whatever, and confine itself to the modest limits of a pure empirical determination of the succession of facts. This succession takes place in a peculiar manner, bearing no resemblance to that in which the single individual fact is formed and developed. But this distinction is absolutely arbitrary, and contrary to the method followed in the progress of knowledge. The progress of the sciences consists, in fact, in unifying and simplifying the concepts which govern our cognitions, and in reducing complex phenomena more and more to elementary principles. So the great importance of experimentation, which has been applied to all the natural sciences and also to some of the moral, does not lie merely in the fact that it serves to explain the formation and development of elementary phenomena, but also and more in the analogy which may be logically established between these elementary phenomena and the more complex which have evolved through a long period of time. Thus it is that experiments in physics aid us, for example, in establishing an induction concerning the geological evolution of the globe, and experiments made in the ethnological laboratory throw light upon the evolution of organic beings.

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<sup>1</sup> See Sigwart, *Logik*, Vol. II., p. 587 et seq.

The particular is strictly related to the general. History is explained by means of individual phenomena; philogenesis by means of ontogenesis.<sup>1</sup> All the actual forces of science converge precisely towards this great end: to find common and simple laws which may explain the elementary processes as well as those which may be called historical.

Now if this is true of all the higher branches of knowledge there is no reason why it may not be true also with regard to psychology and history. What value could these minute and patient experimental observations which are going on in the numerous laboratories of psychology in Europe, America, and even in Asia, have, if we are not allowed to hope that some law or general principle may be found which will hold not only with respect to the individual consciousness but also in the psychological evolution of the species? The attempt made by some contemporary psychologists and sociologists to separate the individual from history and from society, as if these were abstract entities which are placed over and above the individual and from which he is to be detached as an absolutely distinct term, are wholly artificial and arbitrary.<sup>2</sup> But this exaggeration ought not to lead to the opposite conclusion, equally exaggerated, that society is only a sum of individuals. This theory, which has been justly defined as "social atomism," is as false as the other. While society is formed by individuals, i. e., social atoms, it should not be forgotten that the individual himself is a result of society. How and where are the moral and intellectual characters of the individual formed and developed if not in incessant relations with other individuals; relations which are the necessary result of the inner psychological nature of man, in which there is "the consciousness of kind" (to use the expression of a noteworthy American sociologist) which leads an individual to conform his sentiments and acts to his like, in accordance with that

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<sup>1</sup> The psychological relation which exists between the individual and the species is well shown by Baldwin in his book on *Mental Development in the Child and in the Race*.

<sup>2</sup> One of these psychologists is Durkheim. See his *Règles de la méthode sociologique*, Paris, 1895.

law which a still more noteworthy French sociologist has called "imitation"?<sup>1</sup> The limits of this paper prevent me from developing further this idea, which is so splendidly illustrated in modern positive philosophy, and upon which many things might be said. But the intimate relation between the genesis of the individual and that of a species is so real and evident that we may infer from it the intimate connexion which exists between psychology and history.

Now if it is contended that psychology must be restored to the study of the individual consciousness, and that only by doing so can it become a true science, this connexion is lost. But if on the contrary the psychological evolution of the species is considered, not as an empirical succession of facts, which can never be a science, but as a progressive unfolding whose laws must coincide with those of the individual consciousness, then we may truly hope to arrive at a scientific explanation of historical events. Between the simplest psychic process which may be studied exactly and determined by means of experiment, and the complex historical phenomena which are naturally not subject to experimentation but are to be observed and examined with the same objectivity with which we may study natural phenomena,—I say between these two extreme limits there ought to be a perfect parallelism. The processes of historical and social evolution ought to present the same fundamental characteristics as those simpler ones which form the primary elements of the whole woof of psychic phenomena; just as the geological and meteorological phenomena are, with respect to the laws which govern them, identical with the more simple physical phenomena which may be reproduced in the laboratory.

The union of these two extreme terms, individual psychology and history, that is, the study of the most elementary and general form of phenomena and that of the most complex and concrete, must be brought about by that method of psychology which, as we have seen above, is still so variously and confusedly interpreted,

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<sup>1</sup> The intimate union of the individual and society is very clearly shown in J. Mark Baldwin's *Social and Ethical Interpretations in Mental Development*.

namely, the so-called social psychology. This branch of psychology is neither sociology nor the philosophy of history. For the former studies the development of social institutions in their concrete form, while the latter constructs the development of history and of society in relation to general philosophy and ethnic principles. Social psychology ought to be to history precisely what individual psychology is to the individual. It must study, in their most general and abstract forms, the development of ideas, feeling and volition in their long course of historical evolution. It therefore requires the data of the history of society, language and religion, even that of the arts, letters and sciences. But from all these data it must induce some general and constant principle which stands in intimate relation to the laws of individual psychology.

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